

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 TRSE-00 IO-13 /071 W  
----- 017225

R 271432Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3230  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6647

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS

SUBJ: NO PROGRESS YET IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH NEGEV BEDOUINS ON  
LAND SETTLEMENT

REF: TEL AVIV 5479

1. ARAB AFFAIRS ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER (TOLEDANO) ON  
SEPT 21 WAS UNABLE TO REPORT ANY PROGRESS IN GOI NEGOTIATIONS  
WITH NEGEV BEDOUINS OVER THE DISPUTED TITLE TO 1.5 MILLION  
DUNAMS IN SOUTHERN ISRAEL (REFTEL). TOLEDANO TOLD US THAT A GOI  
TEAM WILL RESUME NEGOTIATIONS SHORTLY "WITH THOSE WHO ARE MAKING  
CLAIMS OF LAND OWNERSHIP". TOLEDANO POINTED OUT THAT THE  
NEGOTIATIONS ARE COMPLICATED BECAUSE THERE ARE DIFFERING  
ATTITUDES AMONG THE BEDOUINS THEMSELVES REGARDING THE ACCEPT-  
ABILITY OF THE GOI'S OFFER, AND BECAUSE NOT ALL OF THE BEDOUIN  
CLAIMS HAVE THE SAME DEGREE OF VALIDITY, SOME TRIBES HAVING  
BEEN IN THE AREA TWENTY OR FIFTY YEARS, OTHERS MORE THAN A  
HUNDRED YEARS. THE GOI, TOLEDANO SAID, IS OFFERING LAND AND  
MONETARY COMPENSATION TO THE VARIOUS TRIBES ACCORDING TO A  
GRADUATED SCALE KEYED TO LENGTH OF HABITATION.

2. THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION (NIR)  
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TOLD US THAT THE BEDOUINS REPLACED THEIR BARGAINING TEAM

ALMOST AS SOON AS NEGOTIATIONS BEGAIN IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION. THIS MOVE NIR INTERPRETED AS A VICTORY BY THOSE BEDOUINS OPPOSED TO THE GOI'S OFFER AT THE EXPENSE OF THE "MORE FLEXIBLE" BEDOUIN TRIBES. NIR WAS CRITICAL OF THE GOI'S NEGOTIATING TACTICS--WHICH SHE BLAMED ON TOLEDANO. THE GOI SHOULD NOT HAVE ASKED THE WTENTY-ONE BEDOUIN TRIBES TO ELECT A JOINT NEGOTIATING TEAM, SHE SAID, BUT RATHER, SHOULD HAVE DEALT SEPARATELY WITH THOSE TRIBES WILLING TO ACCEPT A COMPROMISE ON THEIR CLAIMS.

3. COMMENT: SETTLEMENT OF THE BEDOUIN LAND CLAIMS MUST PRECEDE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOI'S LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR THE NEGEV. THE CURRENT NEGOTIATION STALEMATE, COMING IN THE WAKE OF THE DECISION BY THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR ARAB AFFAIRS TO PRESENT A PROPOSAL TO THE BEDOUINS (REFTEL), MAY DELAY RESOLUTION OF THE LAND CLAIMS, BUT IT WILL NOT PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT FROM ULTIMATELY ESTABLISHING TITLE TO MOST OF THE DISPUTED 1.5 MILLION DUNAMS. IF, AS SEEMS LIKELY AT PRESENT, THE BEDOUINS COMMITTEE CONTINUES TO RESIST THE GOVERNMENT OFFER, THE GOI WILL PROCEED WITH THE MORE COMPROMISING ELEMENTS, AND THEN TAKE THE RESISTERS TO COURT, WHERE THEY STAND LITTLE CHANCE OF SUBSTANTIATING THEIR CLAIMS.

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